

*The*

# HOLY GRAIL

AN EXPLANATION OF THE  
MEANING OF THE SERIES OF  
PANELS COMPOSING EDWIN A.  
ABBEY'S FRIEZE DECORATION  
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# THE HOLY GRAIL

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## THE FIRST PANEL : THE INFANCY OF GALAHAD.

The first panel of the series represents "The Vision," or, as it is also entitled, "The Infancy of Galahad." It is an exquisite presentation of the vision of the child which comes in the heaven that lies about us in our infancy. The baby Galahad laughs in supreme delight when he sees the Sacred Emblem whose light is thenceforth to illuminate his way all through life. He reaches up his tiny hands after it, as it is revealed to him by the Angel of the Grail, robed in white and celestially radiant. The very lovely young nun who holds the baby is not aware of the vision, but is somehow conscious of a great and holy happening.

The Grail held by the angel is veiled with red samite, and above it hovers a white dove, a golden censer, lightly smoking, swinging from its beak,—the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit that informs the Grail. The Angel of the Grail is also supported by the strength of the Holy Spirit, the wings of white doves showing beneath the hem of her garment. The

background is a simple plane that emphasizes the simple decorative quality of the picture,—a tapestry of bluish tone embroidered in gold, with figures of lions and peacocks between horizontal stripes of a Celtic pattern, also in gold. In Christian symbolism the peacock often stands for the glorified soul,—hence for the Resurrection, or the change from life to immortality. It is notable that the Lion also symbolizes the Resurrection, as well as strength.

The baby hero, to whom we are thus introduced, has an origin variously attributed in different versions of the legend. According to Malory Galahad was the child of Launcelot and Elaine, daughter of King Pelles, and of the blood of Joseph of Arimathea. It had been prophesied that Elaine was to bear a child to Launcelot that was to grow into a great knight destined to achieve the Holy Grail. So Launcelot, by enchantment, was lured to Elaine, that the prophecy might be fulfilled. The white dove with the censer comes from Malory, who makes it fly in at the window when Launcelot first visits King Pelles. Again, when Bors visited the king, and, beholding the baby in the arms of Elaine, recognized the likeness to Launcelot, the white dove came in, bearing a little censer of gold. The censer here doubtless signifies the nourishing property of the Grail,—the breath of its incense the mystical sustenance upon which the child throve in body and in spirit.

## THE SECOND PANEL : THE VIGIL OF GALAHAD.

Galahad had been given into the keeping of a company of nuns when an infant, that he might be trained in pure and holy ways. To their convent, in due time, Launcelot was summoned to receive him and make him a knight. The second panel represents the ending of Galahad's period of training,—the passing of his boyhood, with his entrance upon the active phase of his great career. He is about to leave his home with the nuns, and has passed the night's vigil in the convent chapel. Like the fourth panel the second depicts a moment of breaking with the old and a preparation for a great event next to be pictured. Here it is an introduction to the culminating moment in the first stage of the drama.

Galahad kneels at the chapel altar, clad in a robe of red. Behind him kneel Sir Launcelot and Sir Bors, portentous in their chain armor. They fasten his spurs in signal that the moment of departure has arrived, with its beginning of life in the world. Galahad's helmet lies at his knees. The two candles at the altar have burned nearly to their sockets. At the distant windows in the upper left-hand corner the roseate light of dawn steals into the low and vaulted space. Behind Galahad and his comrades stands a company of white-robed nuns who hold great candles, the yellow glow upon their bearers' garments blending with the cool daylight that pours through the un-

seen window above the altar. The same light shows in gray reflections upon the steely fronts and helmets of the two kneeling knights in armor. The yellow candlelight glitters upon their backs in fine contrast. The noble face of Launcelot shows in shadow, in grave meditation. That of Bors, beyond, is not seen.

The chapel architecture is Romanesque, of the early Christian type. In the centre of the background is the remarkable crucifix of early form. It occupies the centre of three arches. The beautiful face of the Saviour, beardless and youthful, without a suggestion of the agony that marks later conceptions, but with a divine dignity, a calm that transcends physical anguish, has a strongly classic feeling. On either side of the cross is a kneeling figure; and three other figures, vaguely indicated, are frescoed in each of the adjacent arches. In the vaulted ceiling above is a characteristic Celtic ornament of interlacing curves, red against gray.

The remarkable red robe of Galahad henceforth distinguishes the hero throughout the series. Besides supplying a magnificent accent for the central figure of each panel, the color has a deep mystical significance in this relation. In Christian symbolism red is the color of spiritual purity. It is the spirit cleansed as by fire. It is not the color of passive purity, of mere innocence, as white is. It stands for activity, conflict, human effort, with the knowledge of good and evil that imparts the strength to achieve the

good and resist the evil. The red robe means the protecting garment that the pure soul must wear for its life in the world. It identifies its wearer, through kinship of the same red blood, with the interests and the welfare of his fellows, in whose cause he is fighting. It is the outer personality which must bear the stress of the conflict and receive the bruises and stains that come from contact with the world. But beneath all the soul must remain unsullied.

### THE THIRD PANEL: THE ROUND TABLE, OR GALAHAD AND THE SIEGE PERILOUS.

The third panel, depicting Galahad and the Siege Perilous, forms the most splendid representation of the entire series. It displays a great dramatic moment, animate with a diversity of emotions. The magnificent spectacle invests the supreme interest of a supernatural event with the gorgeous array of a royal court.

Galahad has been schooled in worldly wisdom by Gurnemanz, and the youth now arrives at Camelot to take his place at the Round Table within the grand hall where sits King Arthur with his knights. He is led by the mysterious figure of his ancestor, the first possessor of the Grail after its consecration by the blood of the Saviour, Joseph of Arimathea. It is the spirit of Joseph, robed entirely in white, his head concealed. It is an awe-inspiring moment. Various



emotions thrill the company,—awe, terror, curiosity, reverence, exultation. Sword-hilts, lifted high on every side, give the sign of the cross and portend the conflicts that are to be waged in its sacred cause. King Arthur, enthroned beside the table beneath a rich baldachin, rises from his seat to receive the new knight and leader. Galahad advances with involuntary movement as though in the hands of destiny, all sense of self lost in his sense of the greatness of the moment.

Before him is the Siege Perilous, fashioned by Merlin with his magic, “carven with strange figures; and in and out the figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll of letters in a tongue no man could read.” So related Percivale, in Tennyson’s poem. “Perilous for good and ill,” said Merlin; “for there no man could sit but he should lose himself.” Merlin himself was lost, sitting in his own seat by misadvertence. Tennyson makes Galahad say, hearing of Merlin’s doom, “I, if I lose myself, I save myself.” And so here we see the gentle, heroic youth lost to himself and saving himself for the noblest of ends. No better description could be given of the overpowering impression made by the mysterious figure of Joseph of Arimathea, advancing resistlessly, than is contained in the words of Mr. Henry Van Dyke: “The very sweep of the pale drapery is potent and majestic, like a visible call of destiny, and the form hidden by its folds has the dreadful force of the inscrutable.”



As Galahad draws near, undaunted, but with the reluctance of humility, with the shyness of boyhood, a great angelic figure lifts the red drapery, of the same fabric as Galahad's mantle, from the seat. Above the seat there appears written in the air with letters of golden light the magical inscription: "Cy yert li sieges Galaad." "This is Galahad's seat" is the meaning. The great white wings of the Angel of the Grail brood over the spot,—a spiritual canopy that converts the Siege Perilous into a throne that complements, and surpasses in glory, the throne of King Arthur adjacent.

An immense choir of adoring angels encircles the vast space of the hall, whose huge dimensions are indicated by the smallness of the figures of the knights seen in perspective on the thither side of the great round of the table. This angelic host is not visible to the company. Arrayed in close ranks, file above file, the angels stand in the air just above the heads of the knights. The interlacing of their wings forms a pattern almost conventional in its repetition, enhancing the character of decorative design that the white splendor of the celestial visitors imparts to the magnificent painting. Intimate touches in the composition are those manifest in such a charming feature as that of the pretty page who kneels beside the king's place, looking up with happy face and inquiring eyes, and in the humorous suggestion of the panic-stricken look of the jester hard by.

Malory gives a circumstantial relation of the marvellous letters revealed upon the Siege Perilous. Perhaps Merlin's undecipherable legend declared itself in this inscription. The king and his knights, coming to the hall for their feast, found upon the Siege Perilous, newly written in letters of gold, "Four hundred winters and fifty-four accomplished after the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ ought this siege to be fulfilled." It was the feast of Pentecost that they were celebrating; and Launcelot, accounting the term that passed, declared that it ought to be fulfilled that day. So they covered the siege with a cloth of silk until he should come that ought to achieve the adventure.

The stately architecture of the great hall, so splendidly pictured by Tennyson, in this picture is barely indicated by the gigantic pillars just seen on the left. Otherwise the angelic host conceals the walls, and itself supplies the element of decorative magnificence. In this scene the red robe of Galahad is held by a girdle of golden brown,—evidently that plaited for the young hero as a sword-belt by the fair young nun, Percivale's sister, as related by Tennyson.

#### THE FOURTH PANEL: THE DEPARTURE, OR THE BENEDICTION UPON THE QUEST.

Malory tells how, during the feast, and before the coming of Galahad, news was brought of a marvel upon the river,—a great stone "hoving on the

water," as it were of red marble, with a fair and a rich sword sticking therein. The king and his company hastened to see, but no one might move the sword. When Galahad had come, the king took him to the river and showed him the sword. The youth lightly drew it from the stone and placed it in the empty scabbard that he wore, the sword fitting it exactly. After that most of the knights made vows to join in the Quest of the Grail. But Galahad rode yet without shield. On the evening of the fourth day he came to a white abbey. There behind the altar hung a wonderful white shield, bearing a red cross. This shield had belonged to King Evelake of Sarras, a Pagan converted by Joseph, the son of Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph and the king came together into the land of Great Britain. When Joseph lay dying, in token for the king he made a cross upon the shield with his blood, predicting that it should be borne by Galahad, the last of his lineage, the cross ever remaining fresh as when painted. The shield was hung in the abbey to await there the coming of Galahad.

So with sword and shield sanctified by source and by destiny Galahad and his fellows from the Round Table congregate in the cathedral for benediction upon their Quest, as depicted in the fourth panel. It is a scene of solemn splendor. All the kneeling knights are in armor; and they hold their lances erect, gay with banners of manifold devices heraldic of their

bearers. All wear helmets save Galahad, who kneels in the front rank. The new knight wears an armor of golden chain above his red robe. His left hand grasps his sword-hilt, his right his lance; his banner bearing a red Celtic cross with lines of black. He kneels with bared head. Here also, as in the chapel with the nuns, his helmet lies before him on the ground. An impressive figure is that of the bishop, with arms extended in benediction. About the altar are many kneeling priests. In the background, beyond the bishop, is an iron grill finely wrought in a graceful pattern. Behind it is a suggestion of women figures, perhaps nuns, together with ladies of the court. The general tone of the panel is a warm brown, enriched by the varied colors that mark the pompous array of multicolored banners which adorn the thicket of lances. The picture forms a spectacle of quite another order from that of the dramatic moment of the preceding subject. As already pointed out, it repeats the motive of preparation that marks the second panel and introduces the second great moment which brings the first half of the cycle to a close. The chords are fuller, richer, more complex, than in the first scene at the altar. At the same time the effect is more external, and not so profoundly impressive, as that of the quiet gathering in the convent chapel. Nevertheless, this seems quite appropriate as a prelude to a campaign of struggle, of conflict in the great world.

## THE FIFTH PANEL: THE CASTLE OF THE GRAIL.

The fifth panel, which occupies the entire frieze at the north end of the room, closes the first part of the cycle, which the artist has here divided much as Goethe divided his *Faust* into a first and second part. Here we behold the arrival of Galahad in the great hall of the enchanted Castle of the Grail. The environment betokens a period very much earlier than that of the other compositions. In various things we see that the age is more primitive. For instance, we may note the comparatively rude character of the canopy that shelters King Amfortas, as contrasted with the luxurious elaboration of King Arthur's baldachin.

The feeble old king, worn by suffering, tosses uneasily upon his couch in a sort of waking sleep. Upon the whole court, with its knights, its ladies, and its priests, the same dreamlike spell is evident in the way that the shadowy figures reveal themselves in the dim recesses of the castle. The coming of Galahad has brought a gleam of life to them all; one feels the thrill of hope, of expectancy concerning the promised, the long-awaited and blessed release that the coming of the pure young knight is to bring to the castle, his presence stirring the court as the earth is stirred at the break of dawn.

As befits the subject, the element of the mysterious, the symbolical, is here expressed with uncommon ful-

ness and dramatic power. The exalted conception, the solemn tone of the painting,—these grandly convey a sense of the enchanted, dreamlike existence to which the old king and his court are bound, and of the mystical pageantry of the guardianship of the Holy Grail.

In the midst of it all, vital and actual, stands the figure of Galahad, like a gleam of sunlight and a breath of pure air penetrating the realm of illusion, fresh from the world of reality. It symbolizes, perhaps, the extent to which human effort and intellectual endeavor may, unaided, enter into the mystery of existence and solve the secret of the divine — and the futility of the Quest as thus pursued; for, even though perceiving the illusion, the seeker is inevitably baffled in his search for what lies beyond. To that end he must seek aid beyond himself, outside of his own individual powers. At the side of Galahad there hangs the polished steel shield of the old king, reflecting the red of the young knight's robe. One feels that the reflection means the illusion whose significance the confident young hero cannot penetrate. Beyond the sleeping king there passes the wonderful procession of the Grail that Amfortas and his court are inhibited from seeing while it moves among them. Galahad is endeavoring in his own mind to solve the meaning of it all. There is the Bearer of the Grail, there is the Damsel with the Golden Dish whose prototype is Herodias, there are



the two Knights each with a seven-branched Candlestick, there is the Knight who holds aloft the Bleeding Spear. It is ordained that Galahad shall ask the solving question, that he should demand the meaning of it all. Divine wisdom is not attained from one's own self alone: it must be sought of the experience and the knowledge possessed by others. Galahad deems his own schooling at the hands of the sagacious Gurnemanz sufficient. He can guess the mystery, he thinks. In consequence the achievement of the Grail is long deferred. Others, whom then he might at once have helped, are obliged to suffer long and much.

The figure of Galahad, arrived at his goal, yet baffled in his quest, is one of the artist's finest triumphs in characterization. It is wonderfully sympathetic, as it is unspeakably lovely, as a presentment of pure and perfect youth. The stripling stands transfixed, with gaze mystified and yet lingeringly expectant, wondering at what lies about him, marvelling that the event he has confidently looked for does not happen, perplexed that the spell laid upon the shadowy throng about him is not broken, since the court palpably is touched by his presence, just as clouds begin to dissolve when the sunshine strives to break through. In contrast with Galahad's sunny brightness is the dreaming figure of the gaunt and spectral king. The hero is separated from his goal by scarcely an arm's length. His destiny is almost



within his grasp. Yet he is fated to pursue the Quest through long and weary struggles.

#### THE SIXTH PANEL : THE LOATHELY DAMSEL.

As near disheartenment as one so filled with assurance of a high destiny well can be, Galahad finds himself roaming again. Somehow he has strangely lost the Castle of the Grail : the way thither is as uncertain as though his steps never had trodden it. He wanders through a blighted country that lies under the same spell as the castle. Enthralled by that spell are likewise the three maidens that pass as he sits disconsolate by the roadside, pondering his failure. A weirdly mystical group they are,—the Loathely Damsel and her two companions. In the sixth panel we see the hapless lady riding a white mule with a rich golden harness, her hooded cloak of dark crimson concealing her head,—now bald and with repulsive features that once were of exceeding beauty. The second damsel follows riding, her head and shoulders just seen in the picture. The third maiden is dressed as a stripling in dark attire. She carries a scourge to urge the two steeds forward. The Loathely Maiden holds in her arms the ghastly head of a crowned king, and is weighted down with the burden. In the background are bare tree-trunks in a gloomy forest, the light of a bleak sky gleaming through. The Loathely Damsel has lost her charm

of face,—though still retaining her beautiful young form,—in penalty for the ill she has wrought. Against her will she has to roam the world, doing harm to men, until the achievement of the Grail shall set her free with her companions. They recognize Galahad; filled with resentment at his failure to effect their longed-for disenthralment, they bitterly reproach and revile him for not asking the question when within the castle. He bears in patient sorrow their maledictions, for he feels that they are justified.

What is the meaning of it all? Here in the Loathely Damsel we have a prototype of Kundry, so finely developed by Wagner's art, as in the preceding panel we see in Galahad something of the "Pure Fool," the Parsifal whose youthful innocence, prime essential to the Quest though it be, yet is all unsufficing. Knowledge of the world's ways is needed, that the hero may redeem his fellow-beings from manifold sufferings and misfortunes. Just as Kundry was doomed to work ill to men sorely against her will until one should come destined to release her, so likewise was it with the Loathely Damsel. She stands for the ill that woman unwillingly works for man; she stands for the loss of woman's personal charm that comes with years passed in a world blighted by the loss of its source of life and light, the Divine Wisdom that is possible to mankind; she stands for the power of woman over men and their

kingdoms, making crowns and the wearers of crowns her very own to do with as she may, their lives with their kingdoms forfeit to her. And she takes them greedily, but with much sorrow. So, though merely an episode in the series, the subject of this panel is pregnant with deep significance.

It is notable that the Loathely Damsel retains her essential nobility of nature, typified in her beauty of figure, while suffering the inevitable penalty of her acts through her loss of charm in countenance. The strength of red blood has carried the soul of the pure knight safely through the occupancy of the Siege Perilous,—perilous through the dangers from pride taken in attributes and virtues conferred by God, not gained by himself. It has guarded him through fasts and vigils. It has carried him to the very abiding-place of the Grail itself. But there something more than personal purity was demanded, something more than singleness of purpose. He was a seeker for enlightenment, and as such he was bound to ask a certain question. That is, wisdom can be gained only through understanding. So, meeting the Loathely Damsel, he sees the immense amount of harm that exists in the world and understands its cause. And she, in her helpless anger, gives him the key to the Quest. From her lips he learns for the first time that he should have made question, that therein lay the cause of his failure. When Galahad again comes to the Castle of the Grail, he will know what to do.

## THE SEVENTH PANEL : THE CONQUEST OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

The next two panels are preliminary to the culmination of the sequence of high adventures through which Galahad had to pass before fulfilling his Quest. In the seventh panel we for a second time see Galahad in chain armor worn over his robe of red, engaged in mortal combat with the seven knights who guard the gate of the castle where the captive maidens are imprisoned. They are knights of darkness, for they impersonate the Seven Deadly Sins. Here, for the only time in the series, we see Galahad in positive aggressive action, depicted in a militant phase. At the outset of the Quest Galahad donned his chain-armor, ready for conflict, but upon his first path to the Castle of the Grail he seems to have had no occasion to wear it; without it he entered the enchanted hall. Hand-to-hand conflict with the world's evil is necessary to the growth of the youthful soul. Aided by the armor of righteousness, the pure knight overcomes the Seven Deadly Sins that menace the integrity of his soul, as they bar the gate to the castle where the Active Virtues are imprisoned. Galahad here wears his golden helmet; and we see the red interior of his shield, strapped to his arm, while he wards off the blows of his adversaries. The seven knights of darkness are in scaly armor, grim and gray, and their shields are of steel. The seven knights are brothers,

and Galahad tells them that he has come to destroy the wicked customs of the castle.

#### THE EIGHTH PANEL : THE KEY TO THE CASTLE.

Galahad defeats the seven knights, and they turn and flee. The evil knights are not slain. They flee to other parts. Sin has no further menace for the pure soul, but its embodiments survive to harass the world. The hero penetrates to the inner gate and is greeted by the keeper, an aged man in religious garb. The natural keeper of the human body is world-old Righteousness, who guards the inner gate ; the Sins stand without.

The soul of intrepid virtue has learned to the depths the nature of evil, and has kept himself pure the mean while. With uncovered head, helmet held in his left hand and bared sword in his right, Galahad pays reverent homage to the holy man who greets him, and says, "Sir, have here the keys to this castle!" With these the young knight opens the gates and passes within.

#### THE NINTH PANEL : THE CASTLE OF THE MAIDENS.

By reason of its victory over evil the Pure Soul has penetrated to the depths of human nature wherein lies latent all its potentiality for good. Hence the imprisoned Virtues are set free to bless the world with their manifold activities. Such is

the meaning of the ninth panel, in which the artist has made beautiful use of a great decorative opportunity. This panel is the pendant of "The Siege Perilous," which occupies the corresponding position on the opposite wall. When Galahad ventured to occupy the *Siege Perilous*, he thereby hazarded all the dangers through which he had safely passed when he entered the Castle of the Maidens. Then the Pure Soul redeemed human nature from base mastery and made it the abode of righteousness, the source of light. This was the last great step by which the achievement of the Grail was assured.

The picture is a conception of exceeding graciousness,—replete with loveliness in form and feature, exquisite in its qualities of coloring; delicately luxuriant, and as gladsome to the eye as the sight of a springtime garden after the bleakness of winter days. In most effective contrast with the austere walls of the huge dungeon where they have been held captive is the fair company of godly maidens in their flower-like diversity of array,—pale blue and lily white, rose, lilac, and brocade of golden weaving. The delivering knight receives in all humbleness the shyly tendered thanks of the many maidens. His back is turned to the spectators, his helmet, sword and shield have been laid upon the ground. Upon the shield we see the cross painted by Joseph with his blood,—the same cross as that borne upon the banner of Galahad in the cathedral scene.

THE TENTH PANEL: GALAHAD PARTS FROM HIS  
BRIDE, BLANCHEFLEUR.

After releasing the captive Virtues, that they may beautify and bless the world with all manner of gladness that is born of godliness, Galahad marries the Lady Blanchefleur,—the White Flower of woman's purity that complements the soul of the true man. Blanchefleur, say some of the legends, was a niece of Gurnemanz; and to her turned the heart of the boy ere he had come to sit in the Siege Perilous. In his journeyings he often thought of her. And after he had released the captive maidens he found Gurnemanz wounded and dying. His old teacher told him that he had failed to achieve the Grail because he had not wedded his true love. So Galahad promised to marry Blanchefleur. But on the morning of their wedding he had a vision of the Grail, and knew that none but a virgin knight might achieve it. So he turned away from his sweet wife, and went out upon the Quest.

The picture is the most pathetic in the series. The beautiful bride in her wedding attire sits crowned with a wreath of roses, and in her lap she holds a cluster of the same flowers. Galahad turns away, perhaps not so unwillingly as it might seem, for a sense of the inevitable fills his soul, and the knowledge of his Quest and what it will bring can leave no room for earthly sorrows.



Viewed literally, as the legend may read, it is a tragic moment. But Galahad is not of a nature to wed and then meanly desert, breaking his troth almost at the foot of the altar that he may fulfil a higher purpose. The truer meaning of the holy story must be read into the picture. At the gate awaits a young knightly companion, holding the red-cross shield for Galahad to take and resume the Quest,—the shield that shall protect him throughout the Quest, to the end of it. Blanche fleur, alive to the lofty purport of the moment, shows no resenting, deploring grief upon her lovely face. She knows what calls him away, she knows that spiritually she has been made one with him; and Galahad goes forth with the completed nature, woman joined with man, that is needful for the great attainment. The woman standing behind Blanche fleur, the man awaiting Galahad at the gate: Womanhood with Manhood thenceforth is united. Galahad learns the lesson of marriage, and acquires its loftiest meaning in a union of qualities far more precious to possess than any pleasures of the sense might be.

THE ELEVENTH PANEL: AMFORTAS RELEASED BY  
GALAHAD.

The earthly wisdom taught by Gurnemanz through the alchemy learned from more intimate converse with the same source, through union with the pure

elements of human lore, has been transformed to divine illumination. So, with the strength generated from a knowledge of the Good and from a conquest of Evil, and with his nature rounded out with the full attributes of mankind, Galahad comes again to the Castle of the Grail. He sees once more the strange procession of the Sacred Mysteries. The Grail is borne before him with all the accompanying symbolization that was witnessed once before. Still, he does not understand the significance of what he sees. No man may come into a new and unknown realm and perceive the purport of the strange things there wrought in terms all unfamiliar. But this time the bright boy knight knew that he did not know. "He only knows who knows he knoweth not," runs one of the oldest and wisest of sayings.

Yet sympathy is a key that unlocks the secret chambers where is stored the knowledge possessed by other men. It was one of the keys to the Castle of the Captive Virtues. With heart full of compassion for the suffering King, Galahad turns to Amfortas. Knowing that he must ask a question, involuntarily the words come to his lips: "What aileth thee, O King? And what mean these things?" That was the final key,—the irresistible impulse to help, the irresistible desire to know the highest. The spell was broken. Light and life broke forth from the Grail, gleaming and glowing throughout the castle and all through the court that dwelt there.

The King, the priests, the knights, the ladies, all moved at last in waking life, were nourished from the wondrous substance of the Grail, and were made whole. From the arch-keeper of the Holy Mysteries, the venerable Amfortas, now fully restored to his high office, the knowledge of the use of the Divine Wisdom that flowed from the Grail,—the vehicle that in the substance of things seen holds the knowledge of all things knowable,—was imparted to his destined successor, the knightly and royal youth of the same exalted ancestry as himself, and the last of his line.

So we see Galahad bending in affection over the dying King, their right hands clasped, the eyes of Amfortas lifted to behold the vision of the Grail, seen again by him at last, bringing comfort and blessed release, while the Angel bears it away from the Castle that so long sheltered it, its light glowing through its red mantle and lighting as with sunshine the snowy spread of her wings.

#### THE TWELFTH PANEL: GALAHAD DEPARTS FROM THE LAND.

Come once again to his goal, and this time in the light of the Grail, Galahad has emancipated his suffering fellows who lived with the divine vessel and yet knew it not, nor received the light that shone from it. Yet the Grail itself is not achieved. Galahad is cer-

tain of that end, but still it lies much farther on. So he mounts his white charger and journeys forth upon the Quest for the inexhaustible glories of the Divine. The lifting of the spell from Amfortas and his court has likewise redeemed the entire land from the blight that lay upon it. The Loathely Damsel is once more made whole, restored to beauty and goodness; and peace with plenty abounds among the people. So in the twelfth panel we see Galahad surrounded by the thankful folk as, with banner flying from his lance, he rides away upon his last great adventure. He rides towards the sea upon which he is to fare. High in the background are a town and castle upon a hill. We may fancy that the lady in a lilac gown, kneeling with her back to us in the foreground, is she who was the Loathely Damsel.

### THE THIRTEENTH PANEL : THE VOYAGE TO SARRAS.

Sarras is now the port to which Galahad is bound, and it lies far away. Sarras is the city where King Evelake did rule before he came into Great Britain. Malory tells us that it lay in "the spiritual place." Probably by that he meant the Holy Land, for there was much talk of Saracens and Paynims. Sarras, by its sound, may have been the capital of the Saracens. A great city upon an island, doubtless in the Mediterranean, as a legend has it. However that

may have been, it was Sarras that for a while was to be the earthly seat of the Holy Grail. Thither embarked Galahad in King Solomon's ship, which most wonderfully had been built and preserved for this service. The voyage to Sarras, pictured in the thirteenth panel, is a strong conception of the subject. Solomon's ship very naturally symbolizes the wisdom needful to bear one to enlightenment. The frail bark glides in perfect safety across the stormy waves, under lowering clouds that spread darkly above a narrow streak of sunlit sky which brightens the wide horizon with promise of a prosperous ending for the voyage. The sail is ever spread to a favoring wind, for guiding the ship is the Guardian of the Grail. The angel sits joyously serene in the bow; while she guards the Holy Treasure with tender solicitude, its power leads the vessel in security. The Grail casts its pure light upon Galahad and his two faithful companions, Percival and Bors, who have been privileged to accompany him. Galahad is in adoration, and only he perceives the source of the glory that is upon them all. They may never behold the Grail itself, yet their fidelity joins them with their pure-souled comrade in arms.

This ship, built by Solomon, was of wonderful history. It had been predicted to the wise old king that the last of his blood should be a man which shall be a maid, and as good a knight as Joshua. Solomon had built a ship cunningly wrought in a marvellous

manner. When the ship was made, Solomon waited to go on board ; but because of miraculous letters written by an angel thereupon he durst not enter. As he drew aback, the ship was shoved into the sea and it sped away. How it was kept through all those many scores of years no man may say. But its destiny from the first was to bring Galahad to Sarras.

#### THE FOURTEENTH PANEL : THE CITY OF SARRAS.

Tennyson, in his matchless picture of Galahad's last journey, shows him voyaging to "the spiritual city." But Sarras was not the New Jerusalem, for the "spiritual place" where Malory set it was manifestly, as we have seen, the Holy Land. In the fourteenth panel we behold the last abiding-place of Galahad. The stately city lies along the water. Three ships are moored in its quiet port, and a great red wall encloses the mass of buildings pinnacled and with towers. The purely decorative character of the work is emphasized by the central feature,—Galahad's sword and shield hung at rest. The hero is at the end of his adventures, and his arms are laid by.

When they came to Sarras, the shield of Galahad was recognized by an old man who greeted them at the shore as that of King Evelake, who had ruled the realm in the olden days. Galahad and his companions were received as holy men, and by the power conferred by his purity he made whole the maimed



and he healed the sick. For this the three were thrown into prison by the wicked King who was ruling there. But in their dungeon the knights were fed by the marvellous power of the Holy Grail. At last the King fell ill. He sent for the three knights, and implored their mercy. This they freely gave. The King died, and by all the assent of the whole city Galahad was made king. So came he into his kingdom. He had made himself lord of his own soul, and all else was given unto him.

#### THE FIFTEENTH PANEL: THE GOLDEN TREE AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GRAIL.

Galahad reigned over Sarras for a year. Then came the fulfilment of his supreme desire. While voyaging in the ship and kneeling in adoration of the Grail, Galahad prayed that, when he might ask it, he should pass out of this world. A voice made answer: "Galahad, thou shalt have thy request. And when thou asketh the death of thy body, thou shalt have it, and then shalt thou find the life of the soul."

The decorative simplicity of the final panel unites it most harmoniously with its neighbor, which begins the cycle of the frieze. Here we have the apotheosis of Galahad. The perfect knight at last fulfils his Quest. His saintly ancestor, Joseph of Arimathea, reappears to him, and, disclosing himself, therewith



reveals the Holy Grail. Floating in the air as it is about to vanish back into Heaven from its earthly place of keeping,—sacredly treasured at Sarras since it came with the ship,—for the first time the Grail is seen unveiled. But no man might look directly upon its glory and live. Galahad had builded to its last twig his wondrous Golden Tree, the symbol of his perfected works on earth. Naught more remained that he might do. So came the mighty moment when he should look upon the Grail itself. He made the great request : “Now, blessed Lord, would I not longer live, if it might please thee, Lord !” he prayed.

Galahad, all through his career, from outset to end, has worn the red cloak ; for it has been necessary so long as he acquires knowledge, even of things spiritual, through experience in the world. But now the garment of action is about to drop from his shoulders as he kneels to put off mortality and to take on immortality. The crown and the sceptre of his personal kingdom he has cast at his feet. The Holy Grail itself, the crown, the sceptre, and the mystical Golden Tree are brightly defined in low relief with gilding and metallic lustre, while a company of seven angels with crimson wings witnesses the high achievement. The just man has been made perfect. Galahad is one with God. Divine Wisdom is attained.